

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 06826 162237Z

65

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6826

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, XF, LY

TAGS: SOVIETS AND THE MIDDLE EAST: GROMYKO IN MOSCOW, KOSYGIN IN TRIPOLI

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

1. SUMMARY. AS THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH GROMYKO APPROACHES, SPEECHES BY KOSYGIN IN TRIPOLI (PRAVDA MAY 14) AND BY GROMYKO AT THE WARSAW PACT TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS (PRAVDA MAY 15, TASS ENGLISH WIRE MAY 14) BOTH KEPT UP SOVIET PRESSURE TO RENEW THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AND FIRMLY REJECTED FURTHER RELIANCE ON STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY OUTSIDE A GENERAL SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE MEPC FRAMEWORK. HOWEVER, CONSISTENT WITH THE MAIN LINES OF
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 06826 162237Z

RECENT SOVIET STATEMENTS--PARTICULARLY GROMYKO'S TOAST FOR

KHADDAM APRIL 23 -- THE SPEECHES IMPLICITLY REAFFIRMED SOVIET ASSURANCES ON ISRAEL SECURITY AND UNDERScoreD SOVIET CAUTION AND APPARENT FLEXIBILITY ON THE MODALITIES ON GENEVA. SOVIET-LIBYAN COMMUNIQUE (PRAVDA MAY 16) ALSO SUGGESTS SOVIETS STUCK TO THEIR GUNS OVER THE MIDDLE EAST AND MANAGED TO GET MORE FROM THE LIBYANS THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE IN ANY PREVIOUS SOVIET-LIBYAN COMMUNIQUE. WE SEE THIS BALANCE IN THE SOVIET APPROACH AS A FURTHER MANIFESTATION OF THE SOVIET EFFORT TO COMBINE THEIR STRONG INTEREST IN GENEVA'S REVIVAL, REQUIRING CONSIDERATION OF ISRAELI AND U.S. INTERESTS, WITH MOSCOW'S OBVIOUS DESIRE TO PRESERVE A STRONG POSITION WITH THE ARABS. END SUMMARY.

2. GROMYKO'S REMARKS ON THE MIDDLE EAST APPEARED TO BE MEANT PRIMARILY FOR U.S. CONSUMPTION, ALTHOUGH WE ASSUME ISRAEL AND EGYPT WERE ALSO ADDRESSEES. HIS STINGING CONDEMNATION OF THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH, CHARGING THAT THE IDEA OF SEPARATE DEALS APART FROM A GENERAL SETTLEMENT SHOULD REALLY BE CALLED "STEP-BY-STEP EVER FURTHER AWAY FROM A SETTLEMENT," WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY MEANT AS A RESPONSE TO RECENT U.S. STATEMENTS (E.G., THE SECRETARY'S MAY 13 NEWS CONFERENCE IN KANSAS CITY) REAFFIRMING AMERICA'S RETENTION OF NON-GENEVA BASED OPTIONS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECENT SOVIET FORMULAS, GROMYKO, OF COURSE, CAREFULLY SINGLED OUT ONLY "DEALS" SEPARATE FROM A SETTLEMENT OF THE ME PROBLEM AS A WHOLE, PRESUMABLY TO UNDERLINE THE USSR'S IMPLICIT ACCEPTANCE OF POSSIBLE STAGED APPROACHES TO IMPLEMENTING A SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE GENEVA FRAMEWORK. GROMYKO TYPICALLY AVOIDED ANY SPECIFICS ABOUT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ITSELF, REAFFIRMING ONLY THAT MOSCOW SEES THE NEED FOR THE MEETING'S CAREFUL PREPARATION. HOWEVER, IN CLAIMING THAT THE USSR IS NOT CERTAIN THAT "ALL THE PARTIES ARE STRIVING FOR THIS SAME OBJECTIVE," HE CAME CLOSER THAN ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS TO SUMMONING THE U.S. AND ISRAEL DIRECTLY TO DECLARE THEMSELVES NOW FOR GENEVA.

3. IN A SIMILAR VEIN KOSYGIN'S SPEECH IN TRIPOLI, WHILE CONTRIBUTING NOTHING SUBSTANTIAL TO SOVIET VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, APPEARED DESIGNED TO STRESS AGAIN -- THIS TIME IN A CLEARLY UNSYMPATHETIC ARAB ENVIRONMENT -- THAT MOSCOW IS WILLING TO BALANCE ITS DESIRE FOR CLOSE ARAB TIES AGAINST A FIRM POSITION IN SUPPORT OF A "MODERATE" MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. THUS -- PRESUMABLY WITH ISRAEL IN MIND -- KOSYGIN IMPLICITLY REJECTED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 06826 162237Z

LIBYAN AND PALESTINIAN EXTREMIST FORMULAS ON THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION BY RESTATING SOVIET SUPPORT FOR A PEACE BASED ON ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE WITHIN 1967 BORDERS. AT THE SAME TIME HIS "FRANKLY" DELIVERED REMARKS ABOUT THE NEED FOR ARAB UNITY AND PATIENCE PRESUMABLY WERE MEANT TO PROVIDE ASSURANCES THAT THE ME ASPECTS OF HIS MISSION IN TRIPOLI WERE AIMED AT STRENGTHENING THE COURSE OF MODERATION AMONG ARABS CONCERNED WITH THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT.

4. THE MIDDLE EAST PORTION OF THE SOVIET-LIBYAN COMMUNIQUE (PRAVDA MAY 16) FALLS EXPECTEDLY WELL SHORT OF ENDORSING KOSYGIN'S VIEWS. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT MOSCOW DID STICK TO ITS GUNS AND MANAGED TO BRING THE LIBYANS CLOSER TO SOVIET POSITIONS THAN BEFORE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A SOVIET-LIBYAN JOINT STATEMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, THE LIBYANS PUBLICLY REFERRED TO TOTAL LIBERATION OF ALL ARAB LANDS OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL IN THE CONTEXT OF ESTABLISHING A "TRUE PEACE" IN THE ME. PREVIOUS COMMUNIQUE CALLED ONLY FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 FRONTIERS BUT DID NOT MENTION PEACE WITH ITS IMPLIED ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL. ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE THE LIBYANS ALSO APPEARED TO MOVE CLOSER TO SOVIET POSITIONS BY GOING BEYOND A DEMAND FOR SECURING THE PALESTINIANS' NATIONAL RIGHTS TO A MORE REFINED FORMULA DEFINING THESE RIGHTS AS THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND TO CREATE A PALESTINIAN STATE (AGAIN A FORMULA WHICH SOVIETS MAY INSIST IMPLIES LIBYAN ACCEPTANCE OF LIMITATIONS ON PALESTINIAN CLAIMS). THE SOVIETS AS EXPECTED WERE UNABLE TO GET A LIBYAN ENDORSEMENT OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, BUT WE SUSPECT THAT, IN THE CONTEXT OF SOME LIBYAN MOVEMENT ON THE BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT, THEY WILL DISMISS THIS AS UNIMPORTANT BECAUSE LIBYA IS NOT A POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT IN ANY CASE.

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